



Beyond the Park



mystery

nyc

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Chapter 1 by -

Just the two of us. In Central Park. Sitting on a bench.

"I noticed you come here everyday..." The man said, setting down the NY Times. He turned and looked at me with questioning eyes.

I shut the lid to my Apple laptop and returned the look. "Indeed, I spend my lunch hour here."

"Any new cases?" he asked, very casually.

I wondered how he knew I was an attorney. "Actually, yes. How did --" The man scooted over and laid his hand atop mine.

"Please, don't bother with questions. I know all about you..." He breathed, leaning closer.

Chapter 2 by Bentschet



I was taken aback by his presence, and was about to get up and leave. As I recoiled from his breath he casually grabbed my shoulder, preventing my escape. "Don't make a noise. You're in

danger." He whispered, looking to bystanders as if he was a boyfriend whispering sweet nothings.

"What does that even mean?" I asked, looking up. "What kind of danger?"

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"The new murder case you took on, the one with the psycho and the swords." He was still whispering, and brushed some hair out of my face. He really wanted to keep this boyfriend act up.

"The Samurai murderer?" I asked, remembering the details. The case was crazy, so it had a crazy name. A man with no documentation, no fingerprint matches, no ID, just walked into his neighbor's apartment, killed the owner with a sword, and called the cops on himself. He was arrested and taken into custody without a word.

"What could that have to do with me?" I asked, wondering how a psychotic sword owner could affect me when he was silently sitting behind bars.

"Well everyone thinks he was crazy, right?" He said, hunching forward. "He's not crazy at all. Mentally, I'm sure he's actually pretty smart. While I'm talking about things we were wrong about, here's one more: he's not alone. We thought he was a psycho who killed someone for his own messed-up reasons, but he's got friends. A lot of them, and in high places."

"You're the crazy one." I said, starting to leave. His grip on my shoulder only got stronger, and I was about to shout for help.

"Listen to me!" the man said, flashing a badge to me I did not recognize. "Walk with me to the building over there," He gestured, pointing to a building with a red brick facade. "This park bench is getting uncomfortable, and I don't want to explain everything here." He folded up his wallet, putting the strange badge back in his pocket.

"Well? Are you coming, or would you rather chill with psycho-sword-guy's friends?"

Chapter 3 by go!den-in-the-mist



He was handsome, really. Looked about my age, too. To others, it did seem like we were quite the couple.

We agreed that if we were to help, he would be my boyfriend who had just come from an expedition. That way, it wouldn't seem suspicious.

I looked at my watch, noticing that my lunch time was up. Just then, an elderly woman and man walked past us. Before I could get up, he held my face and gave me a kiss.

I could hear the sighs coming from the crowd as they walked past us, a smile still on their faces.

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He stands up and walks away, and I can see the smug kid gloves on his face. He probably just did it for the show, we didn't want any suspicions, but I could tell he liked it.

I touched my cheek, anger boiling. Why hadn't I done something? I'm stronger than that!

It then dawned on me that I *didn't* do anything because he was right. I was in danger.

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